Biblical Numismatic Society
Publisher of THE AUGUR 9301 Wilshire Boulevard · Beverly Hills, California 90210 · (213) 278-9740

BULLETIN

Mel Wacks will be at the Biblical Numismatic Society's bourse table at the American-Israel Numismatic Association Convention, April 30-May 4, 1980, New York Sheraton, 7th Avenue at 56th Street. Please come over and say "hello" and see our marvelous stock of genuine ancient Bible Coins in all price ranges.

NOTICE

Because of the time it takes to carefully prepare each issue of The Augur, we are going on a bimonthly schedule, but don't worry, if you have subscribed for one year you will receive 12 issues, two years 24 issues. The new subscription rate will be $6 per year (6 issues). And with each $6 subscription you will receive a coupon good for a $3 discount on your next purchase ... so your membership in the BNS can be practically free!

SHEKELS ... OLD AND NEW

Ira Goldberg has just returned from Israel with a small group of Silver Shekels, struck during the First Revolt of Judaea against Rome (66-70 AD). These are the most famous ancient coins of Judaea. The issuance of these Shekels marked the first time that the Jews struck silver coins. These were the the first Jewish coins to indicate a denomination, "Shekel of Israel." The obverse features a chalice and the denomination, with the date (e.g. Year One, Year Two, etc. of the Revolt) indicated above the chalice. The reverse design features three budding pomegranates with the ancient Hebrew inscription "For the Freedom of Jerusalem."

The coins that we have acquired are all Extremely Fine to Superb condition. We are particularly pleased to offer these ancient 1900+ year old Shekels to BNS members now at most reasonable prices. The timing is very advantageous too since Israel has just reverted to the Shekel denomination for most of their coins and all of their paper money. This has caused great interest in the scarce ancient Shekel coins from people who never before collected ancients ... and this probably means higher prices in the future.

However, by buying right "at the source" we were able to pay reasonable prices and will pass these on to you. Just $1300 for a Year Two (67/68 AD) or Year Three (68/69 AD) Shekel in Extremely Fine condition, or $1450 in choice Extremely Fine. We are also most pleased to offer the rare Year One (66/67 AD) Shekels for as little as $1950 in Extremely Fine condition, $2250 in choice Extremely Fine. Year One Shekels have sold in the past (not by us) for as high as $5500! And you don't have to pay all at once ... we can arrange monthly payments.

SHEKEL ORDER FORM

BIBLICAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY 9301 Wilshire Blvd. Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Yes. I want to acquire the most famous coin of Ancient Judaea ... the Silver Shekel. Please check off the coin and grade below:

Year One (66/67 AD)
Wacks 63
Meshorer 148

☐ Extremely Fine @ $1950
☐ Choice EF @ $2250

Year Two (67/68 AD)
Wacks 65
Meshorer 151

☐ Extremely Fine @ $1300
☐ Choice EF @ $1450

Year Three (68/69 AD)
Wacks 67
Meshorer 154

☐ Extremely Fine @ $1300
☐ Choice EF @ $1450

☐ My check is enclosed for payment in full; send coin immediately.
☐ I have enclosed a down payment of $350 and will pay the balance in three or four monthly payments. Please hold the Shekel for me until I have paid in full.

NOTE: EVERY SHEKEL WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PROFESSIONAL NUMISMATIST GUILD CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY.

Name _____ BNS Number _____

Street _____ Telephone (Days) _____

City _____ (Eve) _____

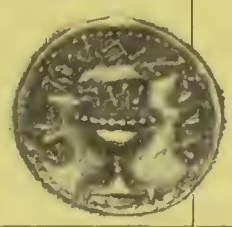
State _____ Zip _____

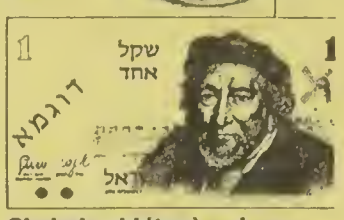
ISRAEL

Shekelization

Old name for a new currency

Israelis last week got a new currency with a very old name. The shekel, originally a weight used by Jews in biblical times to measure gold and silver, replaced the pound, which has depreciated rapidly because of the country's 111% annual rate of inflation. The monetary rate of exchange: ten old pounds for one shekel, which is worth 25 U.S. cents.





Shekels old (top) and new

Finance Minister Yigael Hurvitz called the currency changeover a "mere technicality," but it was clearly more than that. Psychologically, the government hoped, the introduction of a new and more valuable currency would curb the profligate habits of Israelis, who are accustomed to spending their pounds freely. Emotionally, the government hoped, naming the new currency after the ancient Jewish coin would appeal to the Israelis' sense of history. According to *Genesis 23: 2-19,* Abraham paid 400 shekels to buy a burial site in Hebron for his wife Sarah. In Roman times the shekel was not only a coin but a symbol of Jewish sovereignty. In modern times the World Zionist Congress, for example, liked to refer to its annual levy on members as a shekel.

Confusion rather than confidence greeted the changeover, which was actually authorized by the Knesset as far back as 1969. Fearful that the new shekels would depreciate as rapidly as the old pounds, Israelis rejected Hurvitz's pleas not to embark on "a buying spree" and converged on Arab money-changers in Israel to convert the new currency into American dollars, British sterling and even Jordanian dinars.

Chaos is likely to continue for a while. For one thing, the old pounds will continue in circulation for three more months. For another, the new currency is almost indistinguishable from the old. Israelis riding the underground cable car in Haifa immediately took advantage of the similarities. They discovered that the new 1-agora coin (one-hundredth of a shekel) fit into a turnstile slot designed to take 6-pound tokens. They happily rode the cable car at one-sixtieth of the former cost until authorities changed the size of the slot. ■